



Co-funded by
the European Union

Mothers Looking Ahead

Module 6: Pathways to Professional Growth



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution
– NonCommercial – ShareAlike 3.0 License.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project number: 2022-2-SK01-KA220-ADU-000100115

Module Aim



Module 6: Pathways to Professional Growth

This module aims to expand participants' understanding of professional growth pathways by providing support in areas critical for work readiness, such as CV writing, interview preparation, and job search mentoring. The module also aims to enhance inclusivity and cultural awareness, recognizing the influence of diverse cultural backgrounds on professional development. By addressing these areas, Module 6 supports participants in building skills and knowledge necessary for successful entry and progression in the workforce.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, you will have gained the following **knowledge, skills and attitudes**:

Knowledge

1. Factual knowledge of different career options.
2. Practical knowledge of different resources and support systems available.
3. Factual knowledge of cultural competency and inclusivity in the workplace.

Attitudes

1. Cultivate a long-term vision for career progression.
2. Value continuous learning and self-development. Awareness of the community and the part it plays in the local's lives.
3. Openness to recognise the value of cultural and socioeconomic diversity in society and the workplace.

Skills

1. Understanding the steps that are needed for different career options, including self-employment and entrepreneurship.
2. Creating a strategic plan for career development or business start-up, including market research, financial planning and resource allocation.
3. Applying practical skills necessary for job searching such as resume writing and preparing for job interviews.
4. Evaluating the available community support options and accessing these to support one's career growth.

Motivating Case Story

Video: How to get back to work after a career break



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMTKRixZIE>

In this TEDx talk, Carol Fishman Cohen, a career reentry expert, shares her personal experience of returning to work after an 11-year career break. She discusses strategies for relaunching a career, the importance of internships, and how employers are adapting to engage with return-to-work talent.



Reflection Activity

Motivating Case Story: How to get back to work after a career break

Write brief responses to the following questions to reflect on the insights shared in the ta

1. Identify and Relate:

- What parts of Carol's journey resonate with you most, and why?
- Which strategies that she mentioned do you feel would be most helpful in your own return-to-work journey?

2. Personal Goals and Challenges:

- What are your main professional goals as you consider returning to the workforce?
- Identify one or two potential challenges you might face in achieving these goals. What steps could you take to overcome these obstacles?

3. Action Planning:

- List one actionable step you can take in the next month to start moving toward your career goals. For example, it could be updating your CV, networking, or exploring skill-building resources.
- How could a support network (family, friends, mentors) help you in achieving your goals?

4. Create a Career Relaunch Statement:

Based on your reflections, write a brief "Career Relaunch Statement" that includes:

- Your main career goal
- A skill or strength you bring to the table
- A specific first step you'll take in the coming weeks

List of Topics Pathways to Professional Growth

Personal and Professional Self-Assessment

This topic encourages participants to reflect on their strengths, skills, and areas for growth. Through self-assessment exercises, participants gain clarity on their career interests and personal values, which supports setting meaningful professional goals

Career Exploration and Strategy Development

Participants explore different career pathways and create a strategic plan for professional growth. This topic involves mapping career goals, identifying required skills, and addressing potential challenges, helping participants develop a proactive approach to career planning.

Improving Practical Skills for Employment and Entrepreneurship

This section focuses on hands-on skills essential for job readiness and business ventures, such as crafting a professional CV, mastering interview techniques, and practicing effective networking. Participants gain confidence and learn valuable techniques to succeed in their career or entrepreneurial pursuits

Promoting Inclusivity and Cultural Awareness

This topic addresses the importance of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in the workplace. Participants learn strategies for respectful communication and develop an appreciation for diverse perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and adaptable professional environment

Activity 1 Career Inspiration Journal

Objective:

To motivate participants to think creatively about their career paths by exploring inspiring stories, identifying role models, and envisioning their professional journey.

Expected Outcome:

Participants will have a tailored inspiration journal that connects their career aspirations with real-world examples, helping them set goals and take actionable steps.

Instructions:

1. Identify Inspiring Figures:

Think of three people who inspire you professionally. They could be individuals you know, successful figures in your desired field, or role models from online articles, books, or podcasts.



Activity 1 Career Inspiration Journal

2. Research and Reflect:

For each person, find out about their career path, challenges they overcame, and any skills or strategies they used to succeed. Write down what you admire about each person and what specific actions they took that you could incorporate into your own career journey.

3. Create a Personal Inspiration Journal:

Compile this information in a journal or digital document. Add personal reflections on how their stories resonate with your career goals. Conclude with three actionable steps inspired by their journeys that you will take in the next month.



Activity 2 Inclusive Workplace Role-Play Practice

Objective:

To build skills for respectful and effective communication in diverse workplaces by practicing inclusive responses to hypothetical workplace situations.

Expected Outcome:

Participants will gain confidence in their ability to navigate diverse work environments and use inclusive language effectively. This activity helps build practical skills for real-world interactions and self-reflection on communication styles.

Instructions:

1. Choose Two Scenarios:

Select two scenarios that involve cultural sensitivity in the workplace:

- A colleague prefers indirect communication, which is different from your style.
- A team member from a different background celebrates a holiday unfamiliar to you.



Activity 2 Inclusive Workplace Role-Play Practice

2. Draft Responses:

For each scenario, write down two or three responses or questions you could use to engage inclusively. Focus on open-ended questions, showing interest, and avoiding assumptions.

3. Practice Out Loud:

Stand in front of a mirror or record yourself responding to each scenario. Practice keeping your tone warm and neutral, using body language that expresses openness.

4. Reflection and Improvement:

After watching your recording or reflecting on your practice, note any adjustments you would make for clarity or inclusivity.



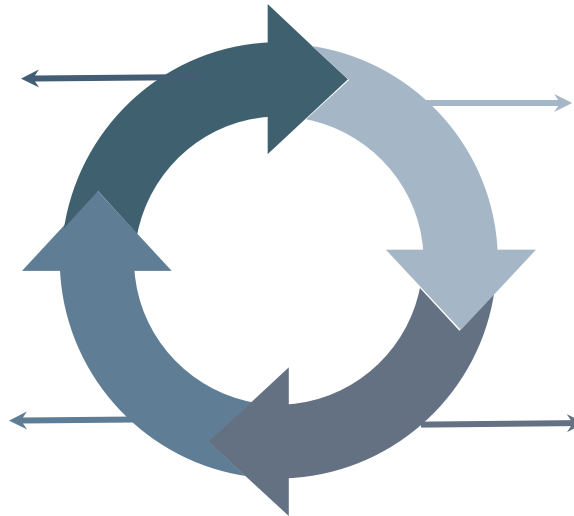
Top Tips

Start with Self-Reflection

Begin by assessing your strengths, values, and career interests. Understanding what you're good at and what motivates you will help you set meaningful goals that align with your personal and professional growth.

Set Small, Achievable Goals

Break down your larger career aspirations into smaller, manageable steps. Setting and achieving short-term goals will build momentum, boost confidence, and keep you motivated as you progress.



Practice Inclusive Communication

When engaging with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, listen actively, ask open-ended questions, and approach each interaction with empathy. This builds trust and fosters a positive, inclusive environment.

Seek Continuous Learning Opportunities

Invest in skill development by taking online courses, attending workshops, or seeking mentorship. Enhancing your practical skills in areas like CV writing, interviewing, and cultural awareness will make you more confident and prepared for the workplace.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Additional Resources



[Coursera - Career Success Specialization](#)

This Coursera specialization includes courses on CV writing, networking, and workplace communication skills. Taught by career development professionals, it's designed to help job seekers navigate the essentials of re-entering the workforce.



[LinkedIn Learning - Building Resilience](#)

This course covers resilience-building strategies tailored to overcoming career-related challenges and adapting to new work environments. Ideal for mothers returning to work, it helps participants manage stress and stay motivated.



[TED Talk - "The Career Advice You Probably Didn't Get" by Susan Colantuono](#)

In this insightful TED Talk, career coach Susan Colantuono discusses the skills and mindset shifts necessary for career growth. She emphasizes strategic thinking and how to position oneself effectively in the workplace.



[Udemy - Essential Job Skills for the 21st Century](#)

This Udemy course covers core skills for modern workplaces, including digital communication, time management, and using productivity tools like Microsoft Office. It's ideal for anyone re-entering the workforce and looking to strengthen foundational job skills.



Ready to test your knowledge?

It's time to put your skills to the test...

[START NOW](#)



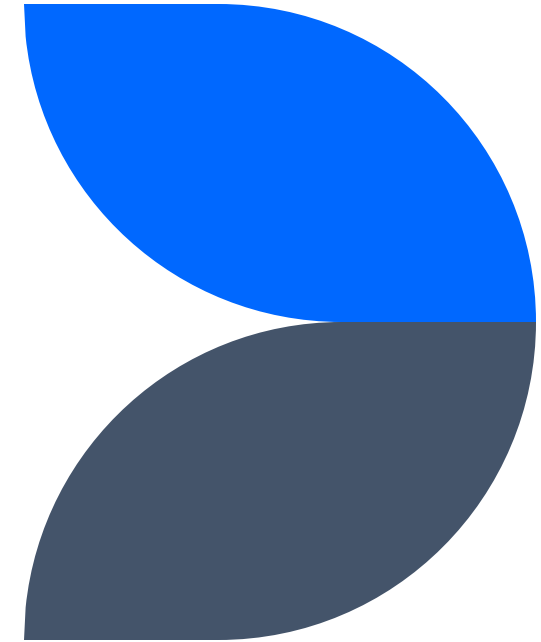
Co-funded by
the European Union



Co-funded by
the European Union

Self-Reflection Questions

- Q1: Who are three individuals who inspire you professionally, and what specific qualities or actions of theirs resonate with you? How could you incorporate these qualities or actions into your own career journey?
- Q2: Think of a recent interaction where you communicated with someone from a different background. What aspects of that interaction went well, and what could you improve to ensure respectful and inclusive communication in future interactions?
- Q3: Based on your current skills and career interests, identify one short-term goal (e.g., within the next three months) you would like to achieve. What steps will you take to make progress on this goal, and what resources or support will you need?





Co-funded by
the European Union

Conclusion

In this module, we explored key steps to empower mothers returning to the workforce, focusing on personal and professional self-assessment, career exploration, and practical skill development. Through self-assessment, participants gained insights into their strengths, values, and career interests, forming a solid foundation for their journey forward. The module emphasized the importance of creating a clear career strategy, identifying pathways that align with personal goals, and setting achievable steps for growth. We also covered essential job readiness skills—such as CV writing, interview techniques, and networking—to prepare participants confidently for employment and entrepreneurship. Finally, we addressed inclusivity and cultural awareness, equipping participants with tools to foster respectful, effective communication in diverse workplaces.

Remember, every step you take toward your career is a step toward building a future filled with purpose and opportunity—for you and your family! ❤️



Co-funded by
the European Union

References

Work Happy Mums. (n.d.). *Work Happy Mums*. Retrieved from <https://www.workhappymums.com/>

High Speed Training. (2022). *What is Inclusive Communication? | Strategies for the Workplace*. Retrieved from <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/inclusive-communication-in-the-workplace/>

BetterUp. (2024). *Mom Going Back to Work After 10 Years: What To Do*. Retrieved from <https://www.betterup.com/blog/mom-going-back-to-work-after-10-years>

AIHR Digital. (2022). *Inclusive Communication: What Is It and Why It Matters*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihr.com/blog/inclusive-communication/>

Hewlett, S. A. (2010). *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success*. Harvard Business Review Press.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Off-ramps-and-on-ramps%3A-keeping-talented-women-on-Hewlett-Luce/cf831c3ed757da807097001ab3e5205bc4337832>

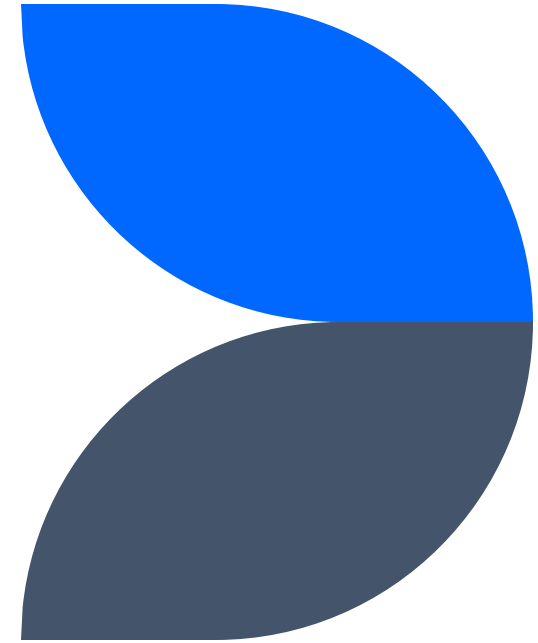
Meyer, E. (2014). *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*. PublicAffairs.
<https://www.cag.edu.tr/uploads/site/lecturer-files/erin-meyer-the-culture-map-breaking-through-the-invisible-boundaries-of-global-business-publicaffairs-2014-pdf-eR38.pdf>

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Knopf.
<https://nibmehub.com/opac-service/pdf/read/Lean%20In%20Women-%20Work-%20and%20the%20Will%20to%20Lead.pdf>



Co-funded by
the European Union

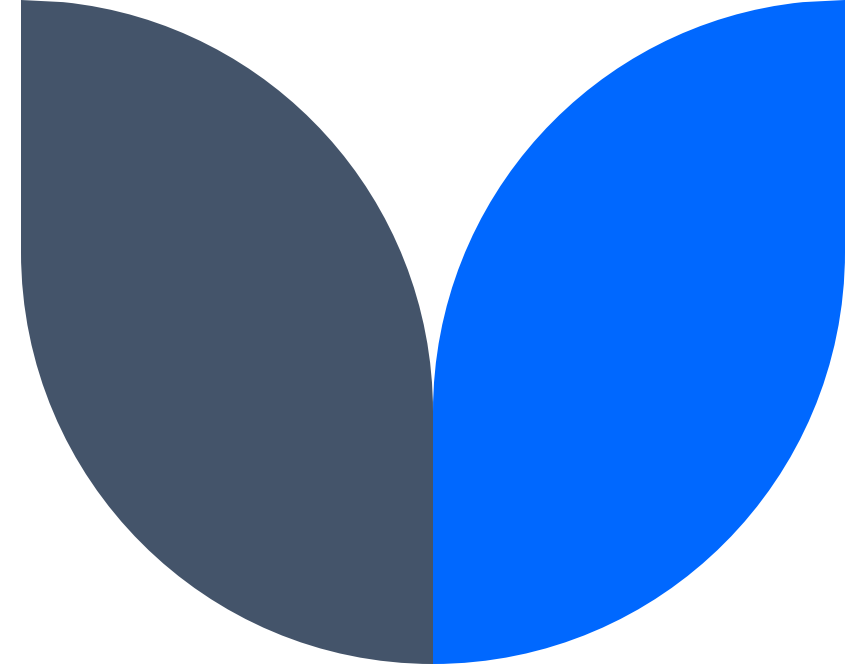
**Congratulations on
completing this Module!**





Co-funded by
the European Union

Mothers Looking Ahead



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution
– NonCommercial – ShareAlike 3.0 License.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project number: 2022-2-SK01-KA220-ADU-000100115